

SMALL HOLDINGS FOR SOLDIERS: A VISIT TO HOLBEACH (Illustrated).

COUNTRY LIFE

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The Government, the Land and the Ex-Soldier

THERE is very little need to point out the timeliness of the article we publish this week on the Crown Colony at Holbeach. There are few subjects of current conversation which are exciting so much discussion at the present moment as the plans for settling ex-Service men on the land. The desire to do so is unanimous. We could wish that it were as intelligent as it is enthusiastic. Evidently the newspaper articles are by writers who have very little practical knowledge. They strike a note of enthusiasm, and argue as though the Government need only acquire land and settle men on it as by the waving of a magic wand. But the process is not so simple. The land of Great Britain is not laid out in small holdings at the present moment. Even the estate at Holbeach, which is the first to be got ready for the settlement of soldiers, before it was acquired for the present purpose was divided into only four farms. Now it has to be broken up into eighty or more. This cannot be done by a pair of compasses. Not only must divisions be set out, but arrangements must be made for the accommodation of the newcomer and his livestock. One of the most obvious difficulties is that of providing

dwelling. Eighty will be needed instead of the four farm-houses already existing. This is work that cannot be hurried in war-time. It is very expensive, labour is scarce, and the materials are both scarce and dear. In the next place, it has to be taken into account that many a soldier who would like, when the war is over, to settle down on the land is not fitted to do so at the moment. It may be that he imagines that anyone can start and make a livelihood out of the soil without previous experience or training; but this is not the case. Small-holding is a difficult art. It depends, first of all, on growing the right things and at the right time. Here some knowledge of the locality is necessary, because situation, climate and other variable conditions have an enormous effect on the result. In the second place, it is necessary for the small-holder to know when he can sell, because his primary object is to earn a livelihood, and unless he supplies the wants of the neighbourhood in which he settles he will fail. In the third place, it is evident that he must find out the cheapest and best way both of buying and selling.

A slight sketch is given in the article of the spirit of co-operation which is introduced into the settlement. The Director buys seeds and manures sufficient for the community. Every member can have these at cost price with the assurance, which he might not otherwise obtain, of their being sold at the cheapest rate compatible with the requisite quality. Nothing can be more convenient for the beginner than this arrangement. He has not yet learned the variations in type between one plant and another of the same name. If he buys stock, as he probably will, he cannot have experience to judge what is best for the district, and so on through the whole gamut of farming. If he were a member of a co-operative society he could perform the operation in conjunction with his neighbours, and probably the Government look forward to a time when he will do that. Meanwhile, they perform the function themselves as far as purchasing goes; the art of selling to advantage he may learn afterwards. If a man of capital thought of going in for agriculture or of putting his son into that line of business, he would naturally take advantage of an agricultural college or some other means of obtaining the special education required. But the soldier returning from the war probably has neither the means nor the inclination to go through a scholastic course. He must be taught—if taught at all—practically. This seems to be achieved fairly well at Holbeach. The operation of manures he may be expected to watch very keenly, because the lesson is put before him day after day, and his own comfort and well-being depend upon his mastering it. Those who can get a hold of the practical ideas which govern the chief parts of agricultural practice sow seed and manure the plants.

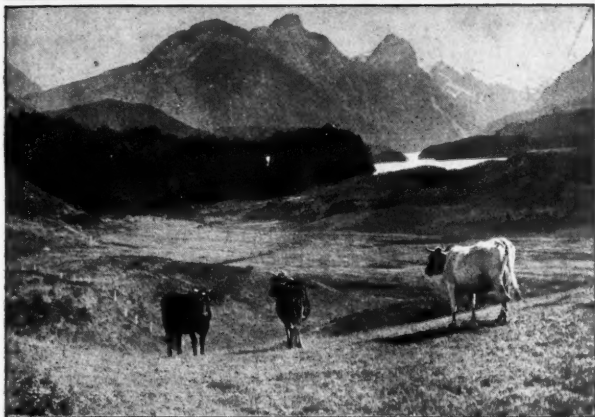
Again, in the employment of machinery he would, in the nature of things, be dependent upon his co-operative society, if it existed; at any rate, we may assume that he would not possess the capital necessary to equip his holding in this way. It is therefore a very wise arrangement for the Director of the colony to have at command a good supply of horses, ploughs, rollers, rakes and other agricultural machinery which can be let out with the necessary horses at cost price. Here again we have instruction given almost unconsciously. It is easy to imagine the average holder watching the effect produced by labouring on the land on his friends' and companions' holdings. He will naturally ask advice as to what course he should himself follow, and if he has sense enough to choose as his mentors those who have had previous experience of the soil and are successfully working it, the end is sure to be satisfactory. But in this connection it should be pointed out that those settlements are likely to be at once the best and the most popular which consist of men from the same locality; that is to say, a Lincolnshire regiment should be settled on Lincolnshire land, a Northumbrian regiment on Northumbrian land, and so on. It would be a strength for a man to be among his friends, and there is a better chance of the holders having local knowledge if they are chosen from regiments recruited in the neighbourhood.

Our Frontispiece

OUR frontispiece to this week's issue is a portrait of the Countess of St. Germans, who, before her marriage to the Earl of St. Germans, M.C., on June 11th, was Lady Blanche Somerset. The Countess of St. Germans is the elder daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort.

*** It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper.

COUNTRY



• NOTES •

PROBABLY nobody was more astonished than the owner of a bed of rhubarb to find advertisements appearing in the papers last week and a notice stuck in the greengrocer's window offering 10s. a cwt., or £10 a ton, for this wholesome fruit or vegetable, which has been called the spring apple. The small grower gave the invitation a cordial welcome, but was probably dismayed to find how little his bed of rhubarb weighed when cut. The reason of this sudden enhancement of the value of rhubarb was stated in our article last week called "The Muddle in Jam." Those who preserve fruit for commercial purposes have found themselves, owing to the vacillations of the Food Controller, in possession of considerable quantities of sugar and a restraining order forbidding them to buy anything like the quantity of gooseberries which they originally planned to make into jam. Even the boom in rhubarb is not likely to lead to the consumption of the supply of sugar. Rhubarb exists in considerable quantities, because it was not used to the customary extent owing to its need of a great deal of sweetening. But the family bed of rhubarb does not weigh much, and £10 a ton is not a large price compared, for example, with the £60 a ton which is fixed as the maximum price for black currants. No doubt Lord Rhondda thought he was very liberal to the growers in naming £60, but, as a matter of fact, a few years ago, when sugar was cheap and there was no great run on fruit, the price paid by large manufacturers of jam was £58 a ton.

THE article on jam has brought us a considerable quantity of private, though authoritative, letters on the subject. In one of these it is stated to be clear that there will be a very great shortage of jam for the civilian population next season. During the present year the Army took about two-fifths of the total supply and what was left was sufficient to give an allowance of something like 4oz. a week per head to the civilian population. This year the crop will certainly not be half what it was last year, and probably much less than half. But the Army is asking for more. Even if they were to take only the same amount as last year the total amount of jam available for the civilian population would work out at less than 10z. per head per week, or a quarter of last year's supply. This may be all very true, but it only strengthens the force of our suggestion. If the present scheme of the Food Controller is carried out, it must result in a greatly diminished collection of fruit, because it depends on a reorganisation of the whole trade which cannot be carried out quickly and promptly enough in view of the fact that the different fruits ripen quickly and disappear from the market. Every flaw in collection must result in a diminished supply, and every delay in returning empties must have the same effect. For one thing the official plan plays havoc with the admirable scheme of the Executive Committees for collecting the surplus fruit of small gardens. One cannot expect the jam makers to go to trouble and expense in collecting small consignments if they are deprived of the right to buy from the large growers.

OUR advice to commandeer jam in preference to fruit is met with the objection that the jam made by small people and by private growers is not of a standard quality.

We do not think there is anything in this. In the first place, it was not urged that the little private grower should make jam on his own account, that is to say, for sale. He should be given facility for making jam for his own household, and in that case the standard attained by him would be his own concern. What we did urge was that the scheme for collecting fruit by jam makers of recognised position should be carried out. We referred to the Society of Jam Preservers, of which every member is an actual jam maker. Now, they may differ in their methods and in their results, but surely it may be assumed that the men belonging to this body would turn out a good jam, although different samples might exhibit various degrees of goodness. But still, it would be all made by experts. Uniformity is a kind of grocers' shibboleth, an original invention to explain the perversity with which it was claimed that factory-made butter was better than privately made butter, whereas it is nothing of the kind. But jam preservers who have been accustomed to collecting in the rural districts would do so far more efficiently than any contrivance that could be extemporised on the spur of the moment, and they could be trusted to turn out a jam that was wholesome and palatable. If the quality was not exactly uniform, what great harm would be done? The soldier, at any rate, would probably like one brand just as much as he did another.

SIR ARTHUR LEE appears to have made a very fair recommendation in regard to the allotment of hay after the requirements of the War Office have been satisfied. Nothing, in fact, could be fairer. He recommends the abolition of the existing allotment committees and the transference of their duties to the new county committees, which shall consist of three members, composed of a representative of the hay producers in the county, a representative in the hay trade, and a representative of the horseowners. In this connection, although not arising directly out of it, we would like to be informed what amount of hay is imported from Canada, Spain and elsewhere by this country. We have broken up many of our best hay fields and seriously reduced the production of hay, but at the same time bring it from abroad. Now, obviously hay is a much bulkier commodity than wheat or oats, and therefore the quantity of shipping needed for its transport is comparatively greater. We have not the exact figures, but are informed that the quantity of hay imported is very considerable. It would be of great assistance if the Food Production Department would publish the figures. They would serve as a guide to criticism of those hay producing counties which have been obliged to plough up some of their best grass.

ON BEACHY HEAD.

Snowy-gleaming
Gulls are screaming
Round the cliffs of snow.
Myriad-dimpled
Azure-wimpled
Ocean laughs below.

Peace unbroken!
Joy unspoken!
Eden everywhere!
Hark, an under
Throb of thunder
Beats—a pulse in air!

Sullen, distant,
Sad, insistent,
Chilling hearts that dance
With its message
Of dark presage—
'Tis the guns in France.

F. W. BOURDILLON.

THERE is a whole world of significance in an incident in the King's visit to Sandhurst on Saturday—an incident that finds no place in the passionless chronicles of the Court newsmen. Not only was the King "ragged," but, what is more, enjoyed every minute of it. It happened in this way: As the King and Queen were leaving, the avenue was lined with some thousand cadets in the most approved mode. The car started. Before it had gone more than a few yards the orderly lines suddenly broke up and threw themselves in a laughing, cheering mass in front and on all sides of the Royal car. The driver stopped, as, indeed, he had to. The officer by his side looked grave, as, indeed, he should. But the

King and Queen just lay back and laughed, as, indeed, they would. Then inch by inch the driver got his car along, what time the crowd of cadets fought against it like some vast rugger scrum. Popularity that evokes that sort of manifestation is something to make even a King proud, and that unrecorded unofficial wind-up to the programme is worth all the ceremonies and set speeches and compliments put together.

WHY is fruit so scarce this year? The question is discussed in an admirable manner by Mr. Chittenden in another part of the paper. His answer is found in the word "caterpillars"; and, although he uses vigorous language to describe the depredations of these pests, he does not go beyond reality, indeed if he touches it. One curious feature of the situation is that these caterpillars are attacking weeds almost as freely as apple trees. Nettles we have found harbouring nests of caterpillars, and that garden nuisance, the dock, has been assailed as much as the broad bean. Indeed, the black insect which disfigures the one appears to be the same as that which is appearing on the other. It seems impossible to find any true explanation. Those who have collected butterflies know that one year a species will be so rare that everybody thinks it is going out of existence altogether, and the next year, or a year or two after, it will appear in swarms. It seems to be with them as with seeds which lie dormant, even for years, until the conditions are favourable for their germination, when they suddenly spring up in myriads.

IN the country a great deal of argument is going on as to whether the extermination of birds is responsible for this plague or not. Against the affirmative may be cited the fact that about seventeen or eighteen years ago there was a plague of caterpillars equal to that of to-day, if not excelling it. One remembers the horrible sensation of walking in woodlands and having every now and then two or three of these caterpillars falling between one's collar and skin. That was a year before which there had been no frosts that would kill the little birds and no anti-bird crusade had been promoted by the Board of Agriculture. Yet we believe that the birds act a beneficent part. For example, the chaffinch may be seen any day just now making a feast of the little green caterpillars which have been devouring the leaves of the apple tree. The bird is called the apple-sheeler in the North of England; and, watching him the other day, we seemed to have discerned the reason of it. Finches have not been so badly decreased as the tits, and yet they probably consume as many caterpillars. An explanation that will meet every aspect of the case has still to be discovered.

SEASON ticket holders are not at all satisfied with the treatment meted out to them by Sir Albert Stanley. They say, with perfect accuracy, that not so many years ago politicians as well as railway directors urged them to go and live out in the country, where they would get plenty of fresh air, cheap vegetables and other bucolic blessings, while the cost of the season ticket might be added to the rent, and so accounted for. The railway companies, taking their cue from the hygienists, used every wile and lure to get people to stay in the country, and, although they charged little for the season tickets, reaped a considerable benefit in other directions. Now the tables are completely turned, and the Government is doing its utmost to discourage people from living in the country. They are, in fact, fining them for the attempt. We cannot consider this wise or useful. The railway companies gained much indirect benefit from their season tickets, and would stand to lose considerably if the fashion for living in Outer London were given up. Yet the policy of the moment seems to be that of utterly discouraging the season ticket holder. He is now subjected to the questions of a shorter catechism of the most distasteful kind.

THE agricultural village at the present moment is not very well placed for the extension of hospitality to visitors. The inns are full despite the restrictions on the sale of food and drink. Many of them are largely patronised by officers from some adjoining camp, and it would appear that commercial travellers are as busy in the time of war as they ever were in peace, while the angler and other pleasure seekers manage to get to the village inn in defiance of all the transport difficulties in the world. Private lodgings have been absolutely engulfed by the regiment of substitutes provided to take the place of the next 30,000 asked for by the Army. This consists of girls, German prisoners and soldiers, and as they have no claim on accommodation at the farms, they throng

into the villages and fill up all the private lodgings. There is, in fact, no room either in the village inn or anywhere else for chance visitors just now. On the other hand, there are hotels which have closed against permanent visitors rather than take out licences to retail food. The commercial traveller who forces himself into their midst obtains only a bed. He has to carry his food with him and cook it himself.

IT might have been thought that ingenuity has been exhausted in the discovery of methods of raising money for victims of the war, yet an original and graceful method has been found for the provision of funds to assist the wounded of our gallant French Ally. This is to hold a Flower Festival in Trafalgar Square. The leading feature will be the daily supply of roses and other fresh flowers during the week in which the Fair is held, but there will be many memorials from the fighting line. Many, too, that will help to awaken sympathy for the wounded. The Royal Horticultural Society, ever to the fore when good work is to be done, is lending much of the equipment necessary for a flower show, and has also induced the great nurserymen to extend their sympathy and help. With the National Rose Society, the National Sweet Pea Society and the National Carnation Society collaborating, it will go hard if the flowers are not fresh and plentiful.

WANDERER'S CHANT.

Out on the high road, Heart,
—So eager, Heart, for all thy pitiful pride!—
Where is the hearth for thee who walkest apart?
Where is the bridal bed, and the cradle-side?
Silently goes thy pride,
Hushed to hearken, lest any call thee inside.

Half of the day is done,
Heart, O Heart! In the track where thy feet are set
There is bitter dust; and the houses, one by one,
Watch thee passing . . . But even comes not yet.
Would that thy sun were set,
O bitter heart, that art proud and eager yet!

Thine be the highway, Heart,
If the hearth of man have never a glow for thee;
But the flame of sunset springs, and the true stars start
Over the desolate moorland, over the sea,
And Peace is appointed thee
In the sigh of the heather wind, in the hiss of the sea.

MARY-ADAIR MACDONALD.

IT cannot be said that the Government have made a very strong defence of their action in commandeering for munition workshops some of the best wheatland in the county of Buckingham. They say it was the only suitable site; but that is a conventional excuse. Mr. Prothero ought to sympathise with the criticisms that have been directed against the proposal in Parliament, because at the beginning of the war he protested successfully against the occupation of good farmland on the Duke of Bedford's estate while waste would have served the purpose. It is all very well for the Government to claim the best site procurable, but in these days everybody has to adapt things to present needs, and surely that could have been done in this case. The Government, through many mouths, is continually exhorting the people of this country to practise the most rigid economy in regard to the use of grain stuffs and to spare no effort in cultivating cereals. A very bad example is shown, and one that may easily have mischievous effects when they take what has been described as one of the finest fields of young wheat to be seen anywhere in the country and employ it for workshops.

IF the facts in regard to tea set forth by Mr. D. F. Shillington in a letter to the *Times* are as accurately stated as they seem to be, the case against rationing tea is very strong indeed. Mr. Shillington's point is that, according to the Board of Trade figures published on May 31st, 1918, the stock of tea in the United Kingdom was no less than 103,636,000lb. against an average for the same period in each of the six previous years of only 86,783,000lb. In fact, the stock of tea at the end of May is the largest that has ever been known. There would therefore seem to be little gain in going to the expense and trouble of rationing it. Tea for long has been considered a necessary by all parts of the population, and it is doubly so now when the use of wine and other liquids is restricted by the increase of price and by the difficulty in procuring them.

THE REVIVAL OF COB COTTAGES IN DEVONSHIRE

IN carrying out any cottage building programme it is of the utmost importance to encourage the construction of cottages in conformity with the tradition and character of the district in which they are situated. This matter was touched upon in the report of the

Departmental Committee appointed to enquire as to buildings for small holdings in 1913, and the words remain as true to-day as they were when written. The principles laid down were that the buildings for small holdings, and, of course, buildings for labourers, should be treated in the same way and should be homely and attractive in appearance as well as convenient in arrangement and economical in cost. The writer, after enunciating this idea, went on to say that "the country districts of England and Wales are unsurpassed for variety and beauty of character, and it would be nothing less than a national misfortune if the increased development of small holdings were to result in the erection of buildings unsuited to their environment and ugly in appearance." It would be easy to take some of the earlier Colonies for the purpose of showing that these principles were completely ignored without invidiously naming any particular set of cottages; while it will be enough to say that some of the models suggest that those who planned them had gone out of their way to produce the maximum of ugliness. But when building is carried out on a great scale it is to be hoped that each locality will be encouraged to produce

it is chiefly because in building with cob, as in building with brick, the methods of the jerry-builder were often resorted to. Many of the early cottages were run up by small men who, under a system which generally prevailed up to the beginning of the last century, acquired small holdings on life-hold tenure



DUNSFORD, LOOKING WEST.

Cob cottages and tiled garden wall.

and put up their own cottages. We have no fault to find with the people for doing their own building. This was the practice not only in Devon but in many other parts of Great Britain. The yeoman, or small-holder of an earlier time, seemed to be more efficient with his hands than is his successor. Even the beautiful cottages of Kent afford evidence that a very considerable number of them, at any rate, were put up

by their owners, who did not study beauty, but only convenience; and in obtaining the latter often did not miss the former. A comfortable cottage is never an eyesore. But in many instances the Devonshire leaseholder built badly and on indifferent foundations. He neglected to repair his thatch, with the consequence that ruin followed sooner or later. He did not always use roughcast, so that it often happened that by the time the lease expired the unfortunate landowner found that the cottage fell in—in the literal as well as in the legal sense. The lower portions of the walls were honey-combed with rat-holes, the walls bulged out or fissures resulted from subsidence, and the dwelling presented that appearance of squalor and meanness that has led so many to decry the mud buildings of Devon as relics of bygone barbarism. But if adequate care is bestowed on the construction, there is no



Chapman and Son.

LEWISHILL.

Copyright.

Cob house temp. Elizabeth; walls from 3ft. to 4ft. thick. A wing was added in 1618. This farm has been occupied by the family of the present holder between 300 and 400 years.

reason why the cob cottage should not prove at one and the same time comfortable to the inmate and pleasant to the eye, and endure for many generations. To quote an old Devon saw on cob, "Gie un a gude hat and pair of butes an' ee'l last for ever." We have induced Mr. Fulford, who

the form of cottage traditional in it. If that be so, then the beautiful county of Devon would do well to revive, in those districts lacking in suitable building stone, the cob cottages which have been the admiration of many generations. If they have fallen out of favour for the moment,

is well known as a Devonshire land-owner and an authority on cob, to give some particulars of the method of building, and in brief these run as follows: The foundation wall of stone should rise not less than 2ft. 6ins. above the ground and be at least 2ft. in width. The clay and shale are heaped into what is termed a "bed" against the foundation wall and there mixed with water. The man doing this uses a cob-pick. As the bed is mixed the labourer pulls the barley straw from a wisp previously tucked under his left arm and scatters it over and mixes it up with the puddled clay and shale. He then lifts the mixture with the pick on to the wall, where it is laid and trodden in by the builder. The heels should be well used. The more it is trodden the better the cob. To allow for paring, the cob should be laid 6ins. wider than the width finally required. The cob should be laid and trodden in diagonal layers, as shown in the diagram: this is to secure proper bonding. The scar, or course, of cob should not exceed 2ft. in depth, preferably 1ft. 6ins. It should then be left to dry. This may, in unfavourable weather, take some days. The sides should then be pared with a paring iron, like a small spade, and the next course laid. The cob-pick with which the cob is mixed and lifted up to the builder is a three-pronged iron fork slightly curved like a hay-fork. In recent years slate or tiles have replaced thatch for the roofing of cob buildings and walls, owing to the cost of reed (the local name for the straw from which the grain has been hand-threshed by flail to prevent the straw being broken), and the difficulty of getting good thatchers. Cob must not be built while



DUNSFORD: COB COTTAGES AND GARDEN WALLS.



DUNSFORD: COB COTTAGES SHOWING GRANITE CHIMNEY AND PART OF WEST, OR WEATHER END, WALL.



Chapman and Son.

DUNSFORD, LOOKING WEST: COB WALL AND HOUSES, THE FIRST HOUSE ON THE LEFT FACED WITH GRANITE.

Copyright.



Chapman and Son. DUNSFORD: BACK VIEW OF "NEW INN," A COB BUILDING.

Copyright.

there is any risk of frost. The season for building is from, say, May to the end of September. The opinion is held by many that the lasting quality of thatch has deteriorated since the practice of liming the cornland has unfortunately been given up. Formerly the ground floors of cob cottages were all cobbled, but these have, generally speaking, been replaced by lime, ash or cement floors. The cob builders of past generations apparently made no use of the square, plumb line or level. No laths were used for the walls which were plastered. Within and outside roughcast or "slapdash" was laid on to the cob. Mr. S. Baring Gould in his "Book of the West," writing on

a wise government would encourage its continuance. The materials are at hand, and the population ready to welcome this form of dwelling-place.

STRANGE STORAGE HABITS OF THE SQUIRREL

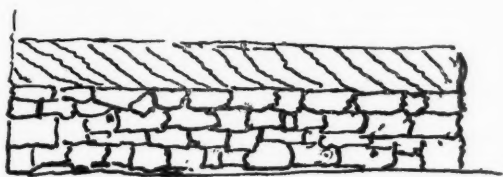
THAT the squirrel lays up a winter store is, of course, common knowledge, but his exact modes of procedure, so far as I can ascertain them, are rather more interesting than generally realised. In the woods I have had under observation, namely, those of the Bolton Abbey vicinity, West Riding, squirrels are comparatively few and far between, and it is quite possible, therefore, that my notes may be at variance with those of observers in different localities.

With us the storage fever takes possession of the squirrels in about the middle of October. Up to that period they appear to live nomadic lives, or, at any rate, recognise a home range so extensive that one can never count on finding the same squirrel in the same locality two days together. With the ripening of the autumn harvest the necessity for travel is removed, and the majority of the squirrels seen thereafter are generally living solitary lives in and about the same two acres of woodland. Somewhere within this range is located the home den, which now becomes recognised as the sleeping place, and it is here that the winter store is laid aside. Other stores may exist almost within stone's throw, but at all events the necessary supply of food is collected within a few days, if the conditions be favourable, and by the end of October all is prepared for the coming of hard weather.

If the weather continue fair, the squirrels, still under the influence of the storage fever, resort to a curious practice which has long puzzled me. Their time is spent at the border of the woods, where they are to be seen collecting nuts or acorns, descending every two or three minutes to earth, where a small hole is scratched and, apparently, a nut buried. I have many times most carefully marked these scratchings, but have never succeeded in locating them with certainty and unearthing the hidden treasure.

For what purpose the food is buried one can only conjecture. Clearly it cannot be part of the winter storage scheme, for if this supply were required it would probably be required when snow or frost rendered it unlocatable or inaccessible, and therefore it is to be presumed that the nuts thus interred are set against a spring of abnormal severity and scarcity. Buried singly in the moist earth they are better preserved for spring consumption than those in the winter store, and though a squirrel cannot, of course, remember the thousands of nuts he has buried during the autumn weeks of plenty, he at any rate retains a hazy notion that at certain recognised spots buried food can be found, and in the end he is as likely to unearth those buried by his cousin or his aunt as he is to unearth those he himself buried.

But there is another and more important end which this curious habit achieves. In all probability the buried nuts are never required, or, at all events, many of them are never located, and these, secure from frost and rot, in due course germinate and take root. Thus, unwittingly, the squirrel stocks and extends his habitat with the varieties of timber on which he is dependent for sustenance, so that, with the gradual increase in his numbers, provision is made for a proportional increase in food and home range. A fact which lends support to this theory is that ninety-nine times in a hundred the nuts are buried not inside the forest



Cob course, or scar, showing diagonal layers.

the subject, says: "No house can be considered more warm and cosy than that built of cob, especially when thatched. It is warm in winter and cool in summer, and I have known labourers bitterly bewail their fate in being transferred from



The cob pick, front and side views. With this the cob is mixed and lifted up to the builder.

an old fifteenth or sixteenth century cob cottage into a newly built stone edifice of the most approved style, as they said it was like going out of warm life into a cold grave." Again quoting Mr. Baring Gould, he says: "Cob walls for garden fruit are incomparable. They retain the warmth of the sun and give it out through the night, and when protected on top by slates or thatch, will last for centuries." It will be seen that the disadvantages of cob buildings are solely due to faults of construction, and not to any inherent defect in properly made cob as a material, and that the construction of cottages, farm buildings and garden walls is well within the compass of an averagely intelligent workman. This is a great recommendation. If the number of cottages is to be increased to anything like the extent desirable it would be of importance to urge every possible form of construction so long as the result is comfortable to the inmate and not offensive to the eye.

It is not intended to argue that the cob cottage could be advantageously built in every county, but only that in Devonshire, where it has been used and liked for centuries,

but at its extreme edge—indeed, I have watched a squirrel repeatedly making perilous overland journeys into the open, a matter of forty yards, in order to do his burying along the earthy brow of a landslip, as though he intelligently realised that this was an ideal spot for a new planting. Thus the question arises—is it because nuts are abundant in certain localities that squirrels have long abounded there, or is it because squirrels have long abounded there that nuts are abundant?

This burying habit continues so long as the fine weather lasts, though as winter draws near the squirrels leave their dens later each morning and retire earlier, till finally they venture out only for an hour or so should the sunshine tempt them at midday. The period of "hibernation" has now begun, though even in mid-winter a gleam of warm sunshine calls them forth, blinking but lively, to gambol among the crisp leaves or sun themselves on the branches.

H. MORTIMER BATTEN.

SMALL HOLDINGS FOR SOLDIERS

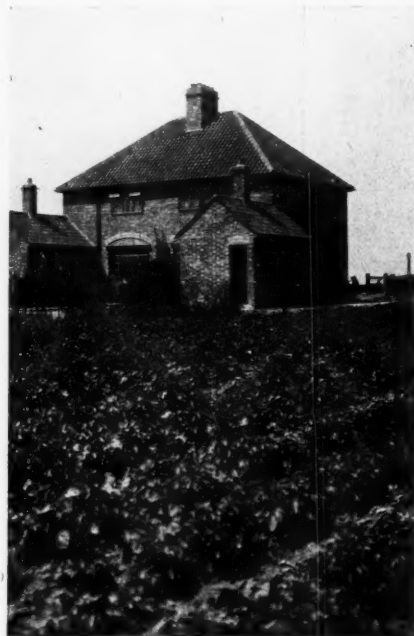
A VISIT TO HOLBEACH.

WHETHER is interested in the settlement of ex-soldiers and sailors upon the land ought to pay a visit to Holbeach. Whether the idea evokes admiration or the reverse, at any rate the people of this country should know what is being done for the heroes who have served them so well, especially as one of the daily papers—the *Daily Mail*, in fact—has gone out of its way to make the assertion that soldiers who visit the new made Crown Colonies refuse to stay there. As regards Holbeach, this is utterly untrue, and the only other colony which is advanced enough to call for settlers is Patrington, and nothing of the kind has occurred there. The chief feature of Holbeach is that the land is ideal for the small-holder. We doubt if there is any equal potato land in the whole country. On June 15th it was seen to great advantage and this feature of the district could not help impressing the most casual observer. Up to the middle of last century and later there was a good deal of dairying carried on in the land round Spalding. Holbeach, as need scarcely be said, is distant about eight or nine miles from that town. It was Mr. Dennis who first saw the immense possibilities of potato growing in the county, and his example was followed by many, so that the pastures were, to a large extent, ploughed up and planted. Now the potato fields are a joy to see. They are obviously a delight to the cultivator as well as a source of profit, kept as clean as a new pin and cultivated not only thoroughly but neatly. This year the crop is well advanced and the drills were beautifully moulded up. They could not have been more regular if done to a geometrical pattern. Young potatoes are ready to come into consumption at any moment, but what is holding them back is that the stock of old potatoes is not yet exhausted. They have none on the colony for the simple reason that they only came into possession at Michaelmas, and therefore had no previous crop; but on

drying machinery necessary for working on a large scale. Hence there was no great demand on potatoes for bread. Now it will be different. Drying plants have been established and potato flour will be utilised on a large scale, a result with which the public will be highly satisfied. There are, in our experience, very few who would not prefer an admixture of potato flour and wheat flour to an admixture of wheat flour with that of inferior cereals. The land at Holbeach is like that round Spalding, a deep rich loam, light and easily worked. It is calculated to bring despair to anyone engaged in growing potatoes on the clay. The merit of land such as this for the use of small holdings does not need insisting upon. No soil can possibly be more productive, and a man can live on a smaller quantity of land here than in any other part of England.

The visitor who goes for the purpose of mastering the question of land settlement for soldiers ought to keep a number of considerations in view. One is that applicants will not have had, in many cases, any previous experience of the work required. Enquiry must therefore first be made as to the means by which these, who may be called the raw material, are to be made into expert small-holders. The next question arises out of the fact that a vast majority of the ex-Service men cannot possibly be possessed of capital. There must, then, be arrangements invented by which they can get on with a minimum of outlay. These are the two main considerations. Let us see how they are met. The Holbeach Small Holding Colony consists of one thousand acres. It is proposed that eventually these shall be divided into ten-acre holdings, and instead of the four homesteads which originally stood on the land there will be over eighty little cottages. What the latter are like may in a measure be gleaned from our illustrations, but it should be kept in mind that the work of building has been finished only in regard to a comparatively small number of the cottages. There are, we think, twenty-two under construction at the moment and a new building in the nature of the case must look a little bare and gaunt. Imagination must stretch forward and picture what the house will be like when its little garden is planted and fruit trees are set along the dividing fences, and flowers and greenery bring charm to what before was only comfortable.

The cottages are well proportioned and well built, two great essentials with which to begin. In the next place, their interiors are designed with good sense and practical knowledge. Little money has been wasted in mere show or ornament, but the three-panelled doors, the little picture-rails round the sitting-room, and things like that show that



BACK VIEW FROM THE HOLDING



COTTAGES READY FOR ENTRY.

an adjacent farm labourers were running the contents of a clamp through the sieve, and the road between Spalding and Holbeach, though it could not be called exactly crowded with great lorries, had a good number on it even at this late season of the year. Further enquiry showed that not only did last year's production meet the needs of the consumer, but that in various districts clamps had been allowed to go to waste partly because of the scarcity of labour and partly because of the glut. There will be still more potatoes this year and yet the farmer need not fear that there will be over many. What happened with last year's crop was that it could not be introduced into flour on that scale that had been contemplated. Little country bakers were able to add to their dough potatoes in one form or another, but the great bakeries of the country had not time enough to erect the

utility has not been worshipped too exclusively. The arrangement is simple and, what is of great importance in a cottage, the staircase leading to the bedrooms is also straight and simple. Two of the bedrooms have fireplaces and there is one without. A strict economist might say that one bedroom with a fireplace was sufficient, as people do not as a rule need fires in bedrooms except in cases of illness; but the fireplace is always a ventilator, and ventilation has been carefully studied, to the extent, indeed, of putting in fixed gratings that ensure it until one of the inmates takes it into his head to close the vent. When the cottager is established in his cottage he will have close to his door five acres of good land on which to begin working, with a prospect of another five coming to him when he has advanced a little. At present the greater part of the land is being worked as one large holding, on which are employed seventeen civilians, twenty-five women, seven soldiers and thirteen ex-Service men. This arrangement has the same effect as co-operation, and co-operation of the most instructive kind. For example, the management buys artificial manures on a large scale at the lowest price and with the requisite guarantees. About £2,000 was spent on artificial manures last year. Now the beginner is usually a little sceptical about the efficiency of what looks to him like a scattering of powder on the ground, but being animated by the ambition to succeed as a small-holder working on his own, he watches with a keen eye the effect which is actually produced. Not only so, but he is constantly discussing the value of the results with his neighbours, and without being conscious of it steadily acquires a practical knowledge of the use of chemical manures. He is not bound to buy anything, but the inducement to do so is that he will make a profit out of it. In order to carry this education further there is an idea that a model farm will be run, of which the accounts will be open to the inspection of the small-holders, so that there will not be any temptation to argue that certain results are arrived at regardless of expense, but the figures will show what is the actual outlay necessary to produce a certain crop. On the same principle the cultivation can be done for them. A man can hire himself out at the excellent wages of the district, and can in his turn hire horse^s and ploughs from the director. There are at present forty-three horses and two motor tractors in use. Now, if we take potato growing as a typical form of the agriculture of the district, it may easily be understood that the new-comer may think the repeated ploughing and harrowing and drilling and working to be unnecessary, whereas an old hand knows that the more land is knocked about the more productive it becomes, and chiefly because each process brings a new surface to be exposed to the sun and atmosphere, and it is also a great aid to cleanliness. Thus the novice has enforced upon his mind from the beginning the advantages of thoroughness in cultivation. It can be claimed for this system that it is more attractive to the small-holder and more likely to appeal to the intelligent than any plan which would involve the soldier becoming a mere paid servant on a large industrial holding. The very conception of the latter partakes of that of a food factory and the men working on it are hands. True, the idea is to pay them in part out of profits, but that is not quite the same thing as giving a man scope to do the best he can for himself, filled with the consciousness that he is his own master. Then the co-operation which comes to him as part of the ordinary day's work will be shared when applied to such matters as selling his produce. The small-holder who obstinately clings to his own isolation is at a

very serious disadvantage when he comes to sell, because buyers naturally prefer bulk. They will not go out of their way for small quantities and, accordingly, the man loses his power of bargaining. But suppose when the colony is complete there are eighty active, thriving men united in selling their crops, they would be sure of securing the best attention and consideration from the most important buyers.



WOMEN AMONG THE POTATOES.

This part of the plan appears to be excellent, especially as applied to that proportion of holders who will have had no previous experience. The settlement is, of course, in its first stage of development, but already five colonists are in possession and going on satisfactorily, and several other probationers are ready to make a beginning in September. It cannot be hoped that the million acres which the Government intends to purchase can all be of the same quality as the land in the neighbourhood of Spalding, and it will be readily understood that the poorer the land the greater should be the size of the holding. If a man can make £20 an acre profit he can make £200 out of ten acres. But supposing that he can only make a quarter of that, then, obviously, he requires four times as much land to produce an income equal to that from the ten acres. As we understand it, no restriction is placed upon the form of agriculture to be pursued. In fact, one of the intending settlers avows a



A ONE-ARMED SOLDIER PLOUGHMAN.

Note: One still is held by a hook. The man is one of the most promising workers on the settlement.

determination to grow bulbs. The occupation may not be very suitable to wartime, although a highly profitable one even now, but as indicating freedom of thought and diversity the proposal is interesting. It should be added that it comes from one whose father is engaged in growing bulbs and he was brought up to that kind of cultivation, so that there is special ground for hoping that he will achieve success in it.

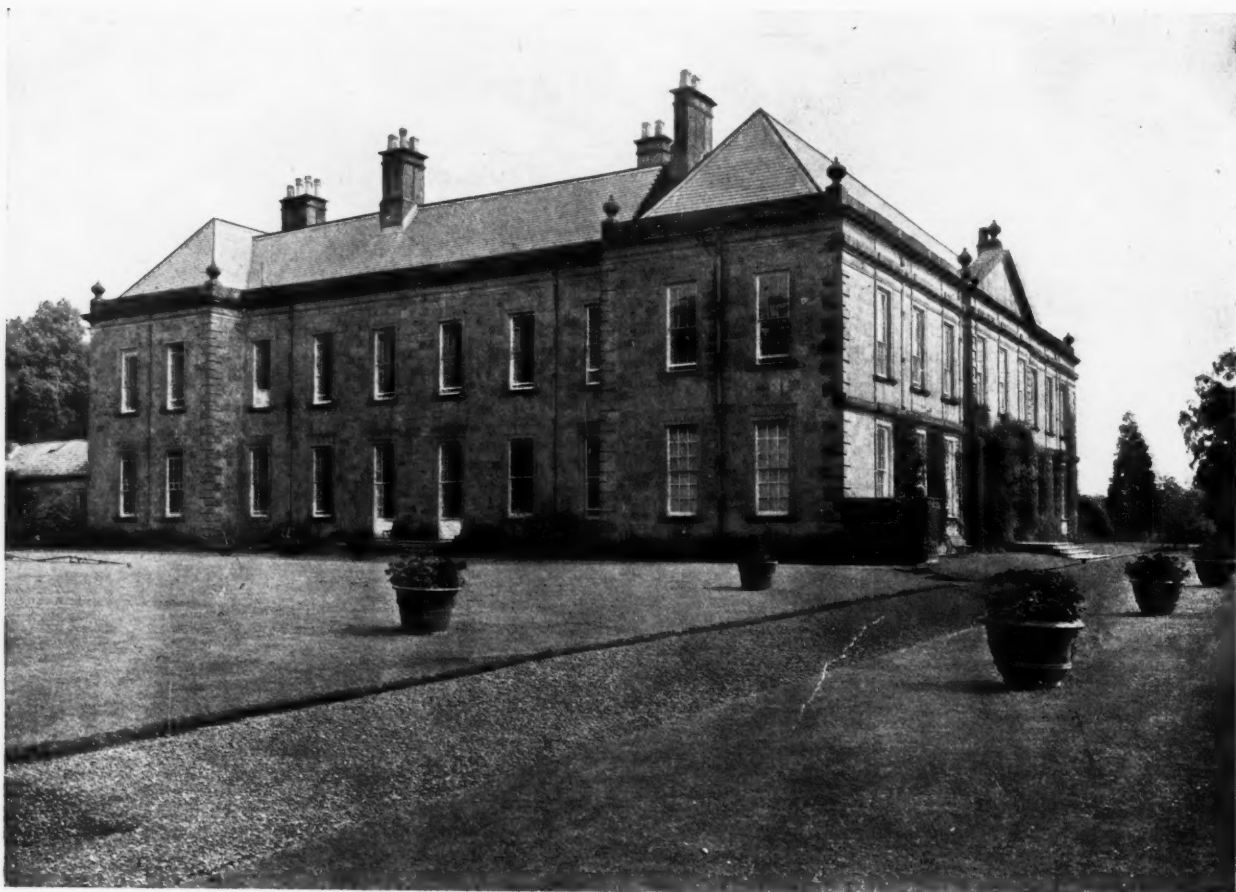


WALLINGTON HALL, where Sir George Trevelyan is passing the twilight hours of a long and closely filled life, stands in the Middle Marches in easy motoring distance of the most historic scenes of Northumberland. Within a score of miles to the south-west the Roman wall shows its most interesting remains; and by the road leading northward across the moors you soon reach Otterburn, where Douglas and Hotspur fought a battle that embalms their fame in undying verse. As if to keep the memory of feud and foray green, the name of the station for Wallington is Scot's Gap, showing it to have been one of the innumerable gates by which the Scottish raiders entered England. Nearer at hand are Belsay and Capheaton, homes of the Middletons and Swinburnes, who divide with Grey the honour of being the most ancient names associated with the county. The river which flows past Wallington Park is known to the general reader by the slight but intimate reference to it in Algernon Swinburne's "Jacobite Exile":

The Wansbeck sings with all her springs,
The bents and braes give ear:
But the wood that rings with the song she sings
I may not see or hear:
For far and far thae blythe burns are
And strange is a' thing near.

Wansbeck is said to mean literally the shining stream, and gaily enough, though, for a North Country brook, rather quietly, it glides from Sweethope Lough, past Kirkwhelpington village, onward to Morpeth, and so to the North Sea. Its charm strikes one as feminine compared with the masculinity of the North Tyne or the more boisterous Coquet.

It is difficult, even with the fruits of John Hodgson's unwearied research before us, to construct an intelligible early history of Wallington. Between 1326 and 1365 it belonged, as there is documentary evidence to prove, to John Grey, who took the local name De Wallington and had a son, "Robert de Wallington, whose only daughter, and heir, Johanna, married William de Strother." In 1352 Wallington East and Wallington West belonged to Alan de Strother, a powerful North Country landowner who must have cut a considerable figure in his time. He was high-sheriff of Northumberland in 1356-1357, and in 1362 he had, with two others, a grant of 2,000 salmon for the King's use in Berwick. By an odd whim on the part of a very great poet he has secured an all too prominent niche in the temple of English literature. It pleased Chaucer to give the name of Alan Strother to the more impudent and enterprising of the two scapegraces in the "Reeves Tale," as told by one of the less devout among the Canterbury Pilgrims. The story is taken from Boccaccio, and the introduction of



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WALLINGTON FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

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Strother's name must therefore have been a piece of friendly chaff, implying a close and joyous intimacy between two frequenters of Edward III's Court.

At Trumpyngtoun, nat fer fro Cantébrigge,
Ther gooth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Upon the whiché brook ther stant a melle

From the "greet college, Men clepen the Soler Hallé at Cantebrugge," someone had to be sent to get the corn ground;

with daughters; and in the reign of Henry IV Sir John de Fenwick of Fenwick Tower married a Strother heiress and hung up his hat—or rather his helmet—at Wallington. The Fenwicks were the chiefs of a numerous and formidable Border clan.

I saw come marching owre the knowe
Fyve hundred Fennicks in a flock,
With jack, and spair, and bowis all bent,
And warlike weapons at their will.



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IN THE DRAWING ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and the "poure clerkes two" clamoured for leave to go and deal with the miller:

And at the laste the Wardeyn yaf hem leve,
John highte that oon, and Aleyn highte that oother;
Of o toun were they born, that highté Strother,
Fer in the North, I kannat telle where.

The rest of the story must be read in Chaucer's poem and not in the columns of COUNTRY LIFE.

The family of De Strother, as has more than once, or twice, been the case with the owners of Wallington, ended

And at the Raid of Reidswire on June 7th, 1575, we are told that

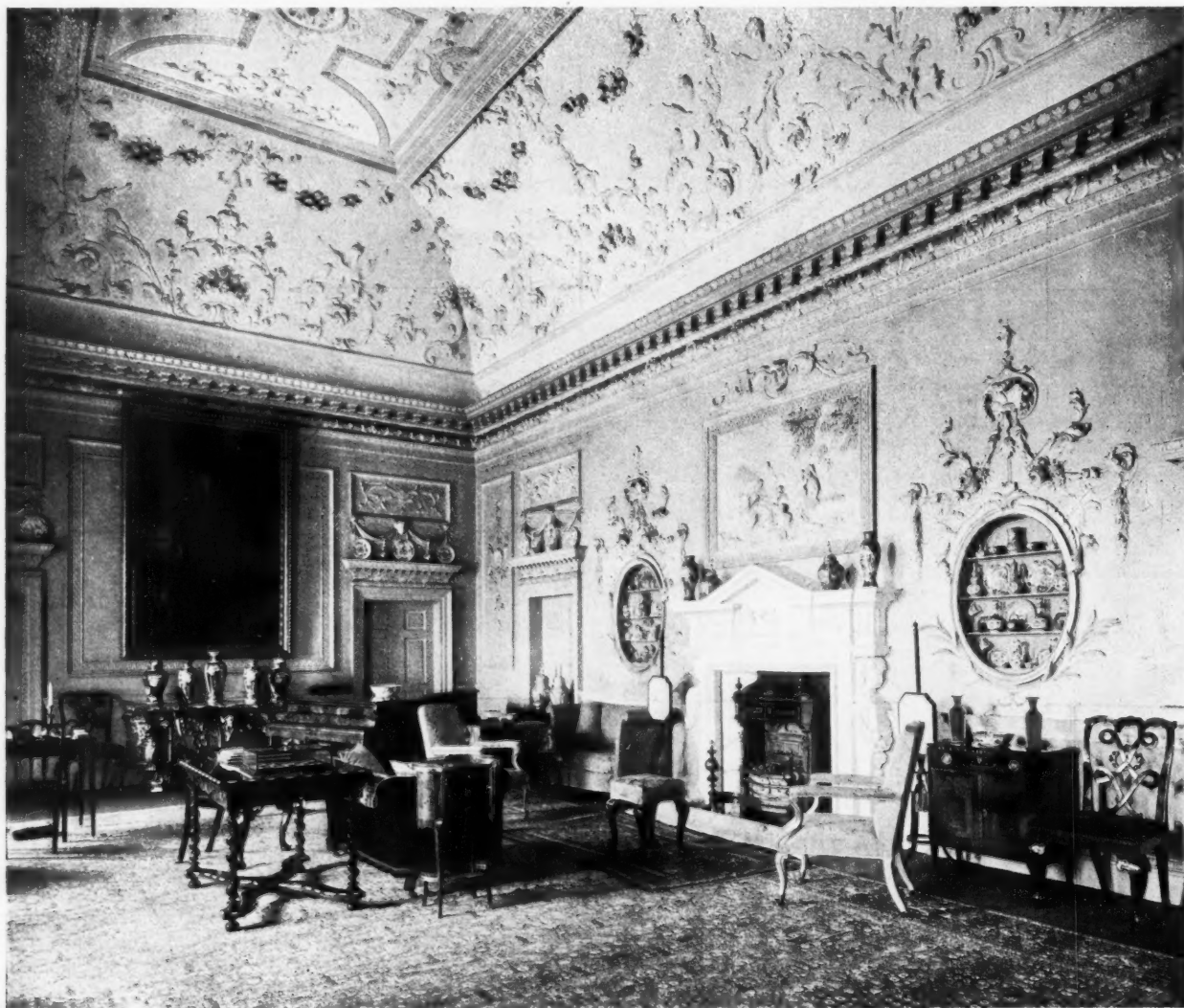
Proud Wallington was wounded sair,
Although he was a Fenwick fierce.

The Fenwicks, who began by being rich and ended by having a great deal less than nothing, built on to the old Castle of Wallington a large Tudor mansion, which was described in the survey ordered by Henry VIII as "a strong tower and stone house in good reparacions."

Leland's reference to it runs as follows: "Wallington Castle 2. miles est from Hutten. It is the cheifst howse of the Fenwicks. Ser John Fenwike is now lorde of it." Punning on their name, the Fenwicks had adopted a phoenix for their crest; and their waterpipes, with their coat of arms surmounted by the phoenix and decorated with angels' heads of the exquisite softness which marks the old English lead-work, still stand in profusion round the existing house. The Fenwicks were cavaliers and Jacobites to the heart's core. One of them was killed at Marston Moor, and the head of his family received from King Charles such consolation as is afforded by being made a baronet. The last of the Fenwicks of Wallington was Sir John Fenwick, who was put to death by act of attainder on the charge of plotting the assassination of King William III. The story is told by Macaulay in thirty pages of his History, and so told that few readers would wish it shorter. In consideration of his having married a lady who was daughter, sister, and aunt of the Earls of Carlisle, Fenwick, for all that he was a commoner, was beheaded instead of being hanged. Sir John Fenwick, by a strange freak of fortune, did not die unavenged. He was the owner of a horse known to every English sportsman by the name of White Sorrel, which, according to local tradition, ran at grass in the Front Park at Wallington, a beautiful meadow sloping down from the Hall to the river Wansbeck and bearing the reputation, then as now, of being the richest pasture in the county. When Fenwick's property was confiscated to the Crown William III, who loved to ride fast even when his state of health was such that he ought not to have ridden at all, reserved White Sorrel for his own special use. He put the animal to its speed in the Park at Hampton Court, where it fell over a mole-hill, with the result that the King fractured his collarbone and died of the consequences of the accident.

Wallington had long before this changed masters, and Sir John Fenwick, when he embarked on dangerous courses, was already a landless and a broken man. From time to time, far back in the annals of Northumberland, a great

commercial potentate has issued from Newcastle-on-Tyne and established himself and his descendants among the rural notabilities of the county. -Such, late in the Middle Ages, was Thornton of Netherwiton, to whom Newcastle owes the fine east window in the church of St. Nicholas, now the cathedral; such in the eighteenth century were the Riddleys of Blagdon; and such in our times was Lord Armstrong and his group of able and eminent colleagues at the Elswick works. Second to none of these in vigour, in practical wisdom, in character, and in wealth proportioned to the standard of their day were the two Sir William Blacketts of the seventeenth century. The first Sir William was rich enough to make two eldest sons. Edward, the heir to the baronetcy, was planted down in Yorkshire by his father, who gave Sir Christopher Wren the all but incredible sum of £35,000 to build him a mansion which (as all who have seen Wren's country houses may easily believe) is still nothing less than a dream of beauty. William, another of the Blackett sons, was put into the business, and he inherited, or accumulated, a very large property in shipping, in collieries, and in lead mines. In 1684 he, too, was created a baronet on his own account, and a few years afterwards he bought out Sir John Fenwick from Wallington and from all his wide domains. Sir William Blackett was not a man to dawdle or hesitate. He at once pulled down the Castle of Wallington and the Tudor dwelling attached to it, and erected on the site a residence on the model of a great French château, standing exactly square to the points of the compass, with four equal faces, each of them 120ft. in length. The house is in perfect proportion, simple, massive and imposing, with unobtrusive architectural details of which the eye never tires. The grey walls, constructed with blocks of stone from the ancient castle weathered by centuries, rise on two of the fronts from the grass of the lawn. Wallington has something of the air, and all the size, of an old Oxford College. No picture or engraving of the castle and mansion of the Fenwicks is in existence, and, if they had been spared to our day, they might, whether restored or in ruins, have possessed an interest and a beauty of their own.



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THE DRAWING-ROOM.

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DRAWING-ROOM CEILING.

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But those who live in a stately and commodious home, built in a great period of architecture and already old enough to be historical, will be the last to charge Sir William Blackett with a want of reverence for the monuments of the past.

The present Hall at Wallington began to be built in 1688, in the same year as Chatsworth—"Anno Libertatis Anglicæ," as the proud and singularly touching inscription along the front of Chatsworth records. Sir William Blackett was as staunch a Whig as the then Duke of Devonshire, and he might have left a considerable name for statesmanship if his ambitions had lain in the direction of politics. Like his father before him, and his successors at Wallington after him, he was Member for Newcastle whenever he chose and for as long as he chose. He was talked of by his contemporaries as an "orator"; and the two keenest judges of a man who then were alive credited him with qualifications for the public service more important than rhetoric. Letters are extant addressed to him by Charles Montague, the most consummate of financiers and capable of administrators, inviting, and at last beseeching, him to take office in the Government. King William (wrote Montague) had expressed an earnest personal desire that the application should be successful, and the Sovereign and the Minister gave the strongest proof of their sincerity by promising that, if Sir William would accept a seat at the Board of Treasury, they would make room for him by displacing no less time-honoured a celebrity than Sir Stephen Fox.

Sir William's replies to these pressing and reiterated offers have not survived into our time, but it is easy to guess at the motives of his refusal. His reasons were probably those given by the vine, the olive tree and the fig tree in the ninth chapter of the Book of Judges. He must have been unwilling to leave the immense machine of varied industries which he had created to the supervision of others, and to undertake the thankless and precarious task of helping to govern a nation divided against itself, in no unequal proportion, over the burning question of two rival dynasties. He was content to remain a private Member of Parliament and a leader of commerce busily and most profitably employed, and splendidly lodged in his residence at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where Charles I had dwelt during the eight months that he passed in the custody of the Scotch Army. It was an old monastery covering the site of the present Blackett Street, standing in spacious pleasure grounds; "very stately and magnificent,"

says the local historian, "and supposed to be the most so of any house in the whole kingdom within a walled town." Here Sir William spent the larger part of his year, diversified by excursions to Wallington in the shooting season and to London during the Parliamentary Session. The house in which he set up his establishment for the time being was always crowded and always cheerful.

The wines of Wallington old songsters praise,
The Phoenix from her ashes Blacketts raise.

Sir William's cellar was famous and his dining-room jovial, and he had a fine family of daughters who, by their good looks and the reputation of their dowries, kept their father's drawing-room filled with eligible suitors. They all married; and their husbands were noblemen and judges and baronets and men of letters who, likewise, were men of wealth and fashion. Their pictures in the corridors of Wallington, all of a size—three-quarters length on oblong canvases of singular but attractive shape—show them as comely and striking girls, if there is any truth in portraits.

The picture of the most tastefully, if somewhat fantastically, dressed of the sisters—and pretty gowns they all wore—hangs over the chimney-piece of the Wallington dining-room in the place of honour, as befits the direct ancestress of the proprietors of Wallington from her day to ours. Julia Blackett, born in 1688, was married twenty years afterwards to Sir Walter Calverley, a Yorkshire baronet. She managed her life well and wisely, like her father's child; and she was a genuine artist. Her tapestry needlework was of rare beauty, representing for the most part well composed masses of flowers of fearlessly vivid and durable colours. After her death it was transferred to Wallington, where it constitutes a veritable treasure. Much of it is on the furniture, and one bedchamber is entirely hung with it, framed in decorated wooden panelling and bearing the date of 1717. In the central hall there stands a six-lapped pictorial screen, portraying rural scenery and pursuits, which the most eminent of living art dealers pronounced to be the choicest, though not the costliest, object of art at Wallington. Such was the eldest of the daughters; but the only son, the third Sir William Blackett, had not much in common with his progenitors. He did not agree with his father in politics, and he was a politician of a mighty poor stamp. He talked Jacobite gossip; he drank Jacobite toasts—a great many

more than were good for him; but in 1715, when Lord Derwentwater and other country gentlemen of Northumberland who were faithful to the Stuarts set their lives and estates to hazard and assembled in arms on the high watershed which overlooks Wallington from the west, Sir William Blackett slunk away to his brother-in-law in Yorkshire and left his braver comrades and neighbours in the lurch. He died in the year 1728, leaving behind him no legitimate issue, a nonentity in the family history to whom the estate, the house, and most certainly the world at large, owed little or nothing.

Then came the golden age of Wallington. The estate passed to Julia Lady Calverley's son Walter, who thereupon took the name of his mother's family and became Sir Walter Calverley Blackett as soon as he succeeded to his father's baronetcy. In 1728 he was a fine upstanding young fellow

of frailties which, in those far from Puritanical days, told rather for than against his personal popularity." He was an irresistible electioneer. A pair of capacious white and blue punchbowls at Wallington, encircled with the inscription "Let us drink success to Blackett and Fenwick," commemorate the terribly expensive election of 1741, when Matthew White Ridley, the great Whig citizen of Newcastle fought, and failed to beat, Sir Walter Blackett, who was the mildest and most amateurish of Jacobites. Ridley, a man of powerful abilities and rare force of character, was Mayor of Newcastle during the rebellion of 1745, and held the city strongly and securely for King George. When Prince Charles invaded England Sir Walter Blackett lived quietly and unmolested, out of the way of danger and temptation, at Anderson Place, his family mansion within the walls of Newcastle; and, as soon as the Duke of Cumberland came north on his march

to Scotland, Sir Walter was put forward as the entertainer of the Royal Prince and the officers of his army. Shortly after Sir Charles Trevelyan succeeded to Wallington in the year 1879 he opened a cellar which had been walled up for a whole generation and brought to light a large collection of the broad-bottomed, squat bottles which figure in the drinking scenes of Hogarth. The most recent liquor of which the age was recorded consisted in many dozens of sherry marked with the date of 1745, which had been laid down for the benefit of the Duke of Cumberland and his redcoats; but it had long ago been reduced to such a condition that it would require an even braver man than the Duke of Cumberland to drink it. It is pleasant to relate that Sir Walter Blackett and Sir Matthew Ridley thenceforward, in peaceable and amicable fashion, divided the Parliamentary representation of Newcastle between them.

When Sir Walter Blackett took over his uncle's estate it was largely a conglomeration of ragged, unfenced crofts and pastures, and undrained fells and moors; but he left it a noble and well ordered property. His achievements in this department have a historical interest of their own as a large and generous sample of what was doing in the middle half of the eighteenth century everywhere throughout England. The record is complete, for there exist three large estate maps on the same scale with every feature minutely marked—Wallington in 1728, Wallington in 1777, and Wallington in the six inches to a mile map of the

present day. In 1728 there were no enclosures except rude earth banks which could be climbed by cattle or leapt by sheep; no roads other than horse-tracks, or at best cart-tracks, winding in and out through the fields from farm to farm; and literally no trees whatever on the whole of the vast acreage, except some patches of stunted self-sown timber at the bottom of two or three of the northern ravines. Sir Walter surrounded the lowland grasslands and corn crops with great whitethorn hedges, which, in 1767, evoked the enthusiastic admiration of Arthur Young, the most celebrated of agricultural tourists and observers; he constructed and maintained very many miles of excellent roads, ready for stage-coaches when they should make their appearance, and running so straight over such long tracts of country that a stranger to the district is apt to enquire whether



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PLASTERWORK IN DINING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

just turning one-and-twenty, fond of enjoyment and fonder still of putting the means for enjoyment and solid comfort at the disposal of his neighbours and his dependants. He was dominated by the ambitions and possessed by a sense of the obligations of a leading country gentleman, and he had at his command what seemed to his youthful eyes the unfathomable resources of the lead-mines of Allendale. For the next fifty years he was lord and master. He spent every farthing of his enormous income, and every farthing that he could borrow on what had once been his all but boundless credit. Inexhaustibly charitable, lavishly hospitable, affable and accessible to one and all, a generous patron of the Church of England, and a noble benefactor to the town of Newcastle, "he had most of the virtues," it has been said, "that cause a man to be beloved, and a large assortment



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CHINA CABINET IN OUTER HALL.

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THE DINING-ROOM.

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he is driving on an ancient Roman highway ; and he planted with so much technical skill and artistic taste that, when he died, the southern half of Wallington estate only wanted time to make it a rare scene of sylvan beauty. He built, or restored, his farmsteads and outlying cottages ; and in the year 1740 pulled down the irregular group of houses which crowned the high crest of Cambo Hill, a mile to the north of Wallington Hall, and erected the carefully planned

or, more properly speaking, a despot, in the art of estate ornamentation—who spoiled, or improved, but at all events entirely transformed, many of the most famous parks and gardens in England, was brought up at Cambo and educated in the local school. And yet, neighbour as he was, he was never allowed to try his hand on Wallington for fear of his doctoring and deforming the natural features of the ground. Sir Walter Blackett, however, gave him a specific and carefully



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DOORWAYS IN CORRIDOR.

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village which, with its bright and variegated gardens peering over the long slope of grass to the south, and the dense tapestry of cotoneaster clothing the continuous front of the line of dwellings, forms as pretty an object of the sort as anything between Tees and Tweed. Sir Walter was to a great extent his own architect, and he most certainly was his own landscape gardener. "Capability" Brown—a master,

defined commission to make a fishing lake at Rothley, five miles north of Wallington, on a barren and ugly region of moorland ; and it must be admitted that the result is a creation of loveliness out of untoward materials, which explains, and justifies, "Capability" Brown's immense reputation.

(To be continued.)

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THE CATERPILLAR PLAGUE

By F. J. CHITTENDEN, F.L.S.

FROM far and near come complaints of devastation wrought by the attacks of caterpillars upon our oaks in parks and woodlands, and upon our fruit trees. Our eyes are offended at the sight of bare twigs in June where the massive green of the oak is looked for, and myriads of caterpillars, depending by their silken threads from the branches, make a woodland path anything but a pleasant one. Doubtless, too, the trees must suffer by such severe defoliation, yet the amount of harm done seems small, for the oak has marvellous powers of recuperation and clothes its twigs anew before June is sped. Its habit of making a second growth in summer seems almost designed to meet such contingencies as this.

Most of the damage to the trees is done by the caterpillar of a small green moth which appears very quickly after the caterpillar has done its work. A fortnight since the roach and sticklebacks in ponds overhung by infested trees were eating an easy meal as the caterpillars dropped full-fed almost into their waiting mouths. Now the pale green moths from those that fell in safer places are flitting about the oaks laying their eggs for next year's brood. Of course the winter moth, the mottled umber, the March moth, and, in fact, almost all those that attack our fruit trees, also feed upon the oak, but the main part of the damage is usually done by the tiny *Tortrix viridana*, which feeds mainly upon this tree and not on the apple.

So far as one can see, spraying is the only means of checking these pests on oaks, and this is not a practicable thing on any large scale. Powerful pumps—fire engines would do—costly hose, much lead arsenate or Paris-green, and much labour would be required; too much to expend in these times even in parks developed for public enjoyment.

If the main damage wrought by the oak caterpillars is to our æsthetic sense, the case is far otherwise when caterpillars attack our fruit trees, as they have done this year and last. There they destroy a large part of the season's crop and render prospects of a crop in the next season slender indeed. In many an orchard trees in mid-June are bare of leaves or are just beginning to start into leafy growth buds that would, but for this damage, have developed into fruit buds for next year's flowering. Not only were the first leaves destroyed, but many of the flowers were so damaged that they failed to set, and the young fruits formed from those that escaped have been eaten or partially eaten, so that in few orchards where active measures for dealing with the pests have not been taken are there any apples worth mentioning.

As with the oak most of the damage is done; most of the caterpillars are pupating; and in most cases the next brood of caterpillars will do no serious damage till next spring. It is too late to do anything to save this year's crop now, but not too soon to plan a campaign for fighting the pest next season.

In that excellent book, "Insect Pests of Fruit Trees," Professor Theobald gives a list of over thirty caterpillars which attack apple foliage, and this list, long as it is, by no means exhausts the species that thrive upon the trees. Not all, of course, of those found are present in numbers large enough to constitute them real pests or to give the fruit-grower real cause to worry, but the winter moth, the March moth and the mottled umber, the green pug and the several species of *Tortrix* (easily recognisable by their habit of wriggling backwards when touched), the lackey, browntail, lesser ermine and vapourer, give us a list sufficiently formidable and containing no insect that is not at times a serious menace to our apples, and none that could not be found in great numbers in many orchards this past May.

Nature cannot cope with such hordes of caterpillars so successfully and completely as the fruit-grower wishes, and her task has been made all the more difficult by the awful mortality among insect-loving birds during the winter and spring of 1916-17. Every country-lover has noticed how scarce many of the insect-eating birds have been, and to this we must attribute, at least in part, the rapid increase of the caterpillar pest upon our trees. It is to be hoped that the officials of sparrow clubs, in their zeal to encompass the destruction of the sparrow, will not fail to discriminate very carefully between the eggs of our few bird enemies and those of our many friends, and will fine rather than reward those who destroy eggs of insect-eating birds; that they will take a very conservative view of what constitutes a sparrow when they are counting heads of little brown birds submitted for their consideration.

It is not enough, however, to leave the matter in the hope that Nature will redress the balance, for unless some very unlikely increase in the natural enemies of these caterpillars takes place between now and next spring, we may look with certainty for another outbreak of the plague then. Something may be done in autumn, something in winter, and much in spring to diminish it, so long as timely preparations are made.

The winter moth, mottled umber, and March moth caterpillars all pupate in the ground beneath the trees, and in all these species the female moths, since they have no wings, are bound to walk up the stems of the trees, or stakes near the trees, in order to lay their eggs near the tips of the twigs or on the young branches. The moth appears at various times, between the beginning of October and the end of March, and if bands of paper covered with sticky grease are maintained around the trees from autumn till early spring most of these females will be caught and the plague prevented so far as these three species are concerned. The greaseproof paper band should be in place by the beginning of October and the grease (such as Bandite or Tanglefoot) spread on it, to be renewed as often as its stickiness is impaired by any means, up to the end of March. In cultivated ground these bands should be put on two feet up the trunk, and stakes should be attended to as well. Where trees are in grass the bands may be placed lower. Bush trees are less likely to be protected by this means than standards, and if they are grease banded each principal branch should have its separate band.

It must be emphasised that grease banding will deal only with the three moths named. There are many others which attack the trees, and no doubt some of the wingless females of these three will bridge the barrier across their path and succeed in reaching the upper part of the tree, and the caterpillars of all must be dealt with by other means. The eggs of the lackey moth are laid in bands round the young shoots in autumn, those of the vapourer in masses on the old cocoons on the trees, the young brown tail caterpillars live in nests on the trees through the winter, and all these are easily seen when pruning is in progress and destroyed during this winter work. The very young caterpillars of the lesser ermine are there too, in small groups covered with a case on the bark, but not easily seen and, therefore, practically out of the range of dealing with at this time. Later on, in May, the caterpillars of the lackey, the brown tail and the lesser ermine form nests beneath which they feed and shelter in dull weather and at night, and these nests should be sought out and destroyed. This winter and spring work is, of course, much easier to carry out on bush or trained trees than where standards are grown.

There remain the caterpillars of species where the female is not wingless and does not lay its eggs in easily discovered groups, and here we have to include the very troublesome *Tortrix* moths, as well as a good many others usually less numerous. For these and for those of the species previously mentioned, which have escaped our autumn and winter vigilance, spraying must be resorted to. If we have no aphid or *Psylla* to fear, the best spray to use is lead arsenate paste at the rate of 1lb. to twenty gallons of water, and the time to spray is just before the flower buds open or a few days earlier. The spray must be applied finely so as to ensure that every part of the tree has a drop of the poison upon it. If aphid is to be destroyed (and by this time they will be hatched), for the lead arsenate substitute a nicotine wash and spray so as to cover every part of the tree and everything on it. The addition of soap will help to wet everything. (Nicotine 3oz., soft soap 4lb., water 40 gallons.) Finally, watch well to see that the means adopted have answered their purpose, and if there is reason to fear that many caterpillars have escaped in spite of them (for some eggs may hatch later), spray with the lead arsenate again within a few days of the fall of the petals, and this spraying will answer for the codling moth too. Where lead arsenate cannot be got, Paris-green or London-purple may be used, but both are more liable to cause burning of foliage than lead arsenate. Supplies of this are likely to be limited, but it is to be hoped that the Food Production Department will see that sufficient is available for use next spring. In some plantations various caterpillars are still feeding upon the trees, and for these the lead arsenate spraying will still do some good.

We have written of the apple, for that is our most important fruit, but plums, cherries and pears all require similar attention; and where they are an important crop, nuts want it too.

LITERATURE

A BOOK OF THE WEEK

Eminent Victorians, by Lytton Strachey. (Chatto and Windus.)

WITH wit and learning, the gift of irony, and a style that might have been borrowed from the *Saturday Review* of the sixties and a touch of the polished Agnosticism which the High Churchism of Mr. Beresford Hope could not exorcise from the writers of that journal, Mr. Lytton Strachey, from the lofty intellectual heights of 1918, surveys the dreary morass which goes by the name of the Victorian Era. "Samples" would, perhaps, be a more appropriate verb than "surveys." He singles out four persons as the medium wherewith "to present some Victorian vision to the public eye." The vision in which he apparently takes most delight is that of his eminent persons falling into religious drivel. His pen would refuse to use so coarse a description, for he does not affect the practice of calling a spade a spade, does not call it anything, in fact, but holds it up as an Irishman might hold up a shirt full of holes, and, without a smile, invites the laugh of his audience. His essay on Cardinal Manning provides typical examples as "the agony of self-examination," when the Church offered the post of sub-almoner to the Queen, "and he drew up elaborate tables, after the manner of Robinson Crusoe, with the reasons for and against his acceptance of the post."

A more serious crisis followed in the shape of a grave illness. In another wild agony he wrote:

How do I feel about Death? Certainly great fear—

1. Because of the uncertainty of our state before God.
2. Because of the consciousness—
 - (1) of great sins past,
 - (2) of great sinfulness,
 - (3) of most shallow repentance.

What shall I do?

He decided to mortify himself, to read St. Thomas Aquinas, and to make his "night prayers forty instead of thirty minutes." He determined during Lent "to use no pleasant bread (except on Sundays and feasts) such as cake and sweetmeat"; but to add the proviso "I do not include plain biscuits." Opposite this entry appears the word *kept*. And yet his backslidings were many.

In this case the holes in the shirt are in the bargain with the Deity to fast from pleasant bread, and his claim for indulgence in the matter of biscuits. Here is another list that followed the transgression of his own rules:

He made out list upon list of the Almighty's special mercies towards him, and they included his creation, his regeneration, and (No. 5) the preservation of my life six times to my knowledge—

- (1) In illness at the age of nine.
- (2) In the water.
- (3) By a runaway horse at Oxford.
- (4) By the same.
- (5) By falling early through the ceiling of a church.
- (6) Again by a fall of a horse. And I know not how often in shooting, riding, etc.

The author finds less to mock in the life of Dr. Arnold of Rugby than in any other of his subjects, but even in him are openings for the well bred, almost imperceptible, sneer:

When he was told that the gift of tongues had descended on the Irvingites at Glasgow, he was not surprised. "I should take it," he said, "merely as a sign of the coming of the day of the Lord."

In a different view

when one of his little boys clapped his hands at the thought of the approaching holidays, the Doctor gently checked him, and repeated the story of his own early childhood; how his own father had made him read aloud a sermon on the text "Boast not thyself of to-morrow"; and how, within the week, his father was dead. On the title page of his MS. volume of sermons he was always careful to write the date of its commencement, leaving a blank for that of its completion. One of his children asked him the meaning of this. "It is one of the most solemn things I do," he replied, "to write the beginning of that sentence, and think that I may perhaps not live to finish it."

The study of Florence Nightingale is mordant and the theory is elaborated that she was possessed of a demon or seized of a mania, but Mr. Strachey does not neglect to hold up to view her, as he thinks, morbid religious introspection as in describing her condition of mind after her father has thrown cold water on her first nursing project:

Her wretchedness deepened into a morbid melancholy. Everything about her was vile, and she herself, it was clear, to have deserved such misery, was even viler than her surroundings. Yes; she had sinned—"standing before God's judgment seat." "No one," she declared, "has so grieved the Holy Spirit"; of that she was quite certain. It was in vain that she prayed to be delivered from vanity and hypocrisy, and she could not bear to smile

or to be gay "because she hated God to hear her laugh, as if she had not repented of her sin."

We might multiply such examples, but it is far more interesting to ask if in anything but form they belonged to the nineteenth century. Can we regard our own time with complacency in these respects? Suppose Tyndall and Huxley to be able from their shadowy Nirvana to take cognisance of what is happening now, would they not be full of bitter regret as they saw that the psychic drivel of to-day far outdid any drivel of their own time? Raymond, for example, finding whisky and bad cigars on the other side? Would they not think "we spend our lives in attempting to clear away superstition and narrow, as far as possible, the mystical territory of which it is not yet possible to have exact knowledge, but from our graves we see the evil spirit in conquering array entering again under the flimsiest disguises. Superstition was scotched, not killed. It is welcomed back even by those who have succeeded us and wear our laurels."

Another criticism to be urged against the author is that he makes too much of Cardinal Manning, unless, indeed, his aim is mainly to show a fine and discriminating admiration of John Henry Newman. Manning was only the busybody of his day. Prominent as was the position he occupied in London politics and London society, he never entered into, far less interpreted, the heart of England. Ambitious, clever and tactful, he thrashed his way upward till it seemed that his ambition must be sated and the last of his desires fulfilled. To the end he remained, as he had always been, one of those Children of Men who are wiser in their generation than the Children of Light. And he knew it, knew that no vulgar success could place him side by side with the unworldly Newman, who, with the subtlest intellect of his day, united a heart of childlike simplicity and the endowment of a great poet. How barren the activeness of Manning compared with the intense sadness, the apparent failure! Newman was indeed one of the Children of Light. Newman is inalienable from the age in which he lived, and immortal; only dead bones can be brought to the surface by stirring the waters of oblivion that wash over Manning's fame.

Oriental Encounters, by Marmaduke Pickthall. (Collins, 6s.)

MR. MARMADUKE PICKTHALL calls his latest book "a record of small things," "a comic sketch-book of experience." However that may be, we find its humour and ease a refreshment in a world where even books are reflecting life grown too grim. *Oriental Encounters* is the record of how as a youth Mr. Pickthall made his way to Syria and saw it, not as the missionary sees it, or the tourist, or even the colonist, but as the people themselves see it, the "easy gay Eastern life" which he contrasts with that of the European "hosts of joyless drudgery" and something of its ease he passes on to his readers. "Rashid the Fair," the soldier whom he bought out of the Turkish Army to become his servant, is the sort of fellow it would do anyone good to meet—simple, faithful, childish and, above all, humorous; and he and the wise Suleymân between them have such fine expedients and devices upon every emergency that each new difficulty makes us but the more eager to see which will cope with it. The story of the courteous judge who released Mr. Pickthall's cook when, by Suleymân's suggestion, he had been invited to dinner, is delightful, but we liked better "The Parting of the Ways," in which a missionary tried to win the English youth back to civilisation. When his decision to remain was made, the joy of Rashid and Suleymân knew no bounds. "Praise be to Allah," said Suleymân, "we shall still know joy." It is a book which is neither a novel, a collection of short stories, nor a traveller's tale, but something of all three, adorned with sunshine, laughter and pathos, and founded on fact.

The Desert Campaigns, by W. T. Massey. Illustrated by James McBey. (Constable, 6s.)

THE average man somewhat bewildered by the magnitude of the war and harassed by the emergencies of everyday life is not apt to achieve a clear idea of what is doing or has been done on each of the widely separated fronts on which the war is being waged. Mr. W. T. Massey in his book *The Desert Campaigns* has done much towards remedying the vagueness of the average man's conception of affairs where the Egyptian Expeditionary Force is concerned, from the outbreak of war to the Battle of Raga, when the Turk was finally driven from Egyptian territory. As Official Correspondent with that force Mr. Massey had splendid opportunities of seeing what was done, and the tale he has to tell is full of interest. It is a tale of foresight, of well laid plans, of tireless work, of the difficulties attendant on moving troops into the waterless desert and of digging miles of trenches in the shifting sands, of combating a foe unbelievably well prepared. Beyond and above this it is a tale of heroic deeds; the territorial names of Scotch and English regiments sound gratefully to our ears in these records from a land of fires and heat and sunshine, and the glorious deeds of Australians, New Zealanders and other Colonial forces are well and duly called to remembrance. A little more repetition of dates, say at the head of each chapter, would have added to the value of a solid and inspiring piece of work, to which Mr. James McBey, the Official Artist with the Force, has contributed twenty-four illustrations.

CORRESPONDENCE

VILLAGE FRUIT FOR VILLAGE JAM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read with very much interest the article in COUNTRY LIFE of last week on "The Muddle in Jam." May I give my experience, which might prove helpful. Last year we ran the bottling of fruit on a co-operative basis. The villagers sold the fruit to the Iwerne Minster Co-operative Produce Society, and all this was bottled by two women in the village. In addition we also bottled any fruit which the villagers desired to keep for their own consumption, at a price which covered the expense of the bottling. This year we have progressed. I wrote to the Controller of Sugar and told him that I could see my way to make at least one ton of jam at the Village Institute, but that I would not do so if innumerable forms had to be filled in. Someone who held a responsible position in connection with sugar or food control took a broad view, and has allocated me 18cwt. of sugar. Therefore at our Village Club we are busy making jam, and we shall have enough fruit to use the sugar. The jam is put into 2lb. bottles supplied by the Food Production Department at a reasonable price; the bottles have not unpleasant labels bearing the name of the Iwerne Minster Produce Society, and a description of the jam. As to the finance, I have purchased the bottles and paid all the expenses so far, including the cost of the fruit at Government prices delivered to the Village Institute. When the jam is sold to the Government buyer every expense will be deducted, and all profit, if any, will be paid to those who supplied the fruit in the proportion in which they provided it. I am very hopeful that I shall have to make an application to the Sugar Controller for increased sugar, as, so far, gooseberries have been delivered in greater quantities at the Institute than, in this exceptionally bad year for fruit, I had expected. This plan would be feasible in many villages, and if Iwerne Minster can produce a ton of jam, or even more, then many villages should be able to do the same.—JAMES ISMAY.

THE AGRICULTURAL UNIT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I venture to suggest that nothing is really gained by insisting on the difference between urban and rural housing. To do that is to commit the mistake we have been making for so long of separating agriculture from industry in general. The war has caused us to recognise agriculture as the basic natural industry, and in doing that it has brought it into relation with the industrial development of the country. The war has also shown us that all industry depends upon an organised community; and as the basis of our plans for reconstruction we should surely recognise the proper organisation of communities in order to secure maximum production (in agriculture as in other industries) as well as the well-being of the workers. Is it too much to hope that instead of the single farm, or the village, or the parish, the small town should once again be recognised as the agricultural unit? By so doing the influence of the organised community is brought to bear upon the problems of rural life, and rural housing can then be regarded as an extension of urban housing. The reconstructed small town planned for modern manufacture might be made a factor in a new agricultural policy.—C. B. PURDOM, Hon. Secretary, National Garden Cities Committee, 19, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.

[In his lecture to the Farmers' Club Mr. Sneed very clearly defined the difference between urban and rural housing. Our correspondent should read what he said, because, whether his arguments were good or bad, they were clear and intelligible. It is no answer to them to say that "nothing is really gained by insisting on the difference." Questions that Mr. Purdom must be prepared to answer are: (1) When was the small town recognised as an agricultural unit; and (2) If a labourer lived in a small town, how far would he have to go to his work? In regard to the latter question, it is surely plain that the urban labourer can take his 'bus or his "Underground," whereas the rural labourer in practice must either walk or cycle. This in itself surely constitutes a difference between urban and rural conditions, a difference that must be met in any good system of housing.—ED.]

BOND STREET, OLD AND NEW.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Seeing Mr. Kingsford's interesting article on "History in London Streets" in COUNTRY LIFE of June 1st, I am writing to ask you if you could give me any information as to the history of Bond Street (Old and New)? I have never read anywhere information as to the construction of this celebrated street.—JAMES HALL RENTON.

[We are indebted to Mr. Kingsford for the following very interesting notes replying to our correspondent's letter: In the reign of James I and down to the eve of the Civil War the nobility and people of rank had their London residences chiefly along the Strand and on the outskirts of the City. But after the Restoration fashion began to move further West. In 1664 Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, who was the confidant of the Queen-Mother Henrietta Maria, obtained a grant of land in Pall Mall and laid out St. James's Square and the street that bears his name. At the same time building began in Piccadilly. On February 20th, 1665, Pepys rode with Sir John Minnes "to the beginning of my Lord Chancellor's new house near St. James's. Very noble I believe it will be. Near that is my Lord Berkeley beginning another on one side, and Sir John Denham on the other." The house which Denham was building was for the Earl of Burlington, who, according to a later story, chose the site because there were no other houses further west. The story is manifestly untrue, for Lord Chancellor Clarendon's house and Berkeley House (on the site of Devonshire House) were already being erected. Clarendon House was a sumptuous building which cost £50,000. After the Chancellor's death his heirs sold it for half that sum to the young Duke of Albemarle. Within a few years it was decreed to ruin to support the prodigious waste the Duke had made of his estate. On September 18th, 1683, Evelyn "walked to survey the sad demolition of Clarendon House." It had been sold to the highest bidder, and, says Evelyn, "fell to

certain rich bankers and mechanics who gave for it and the ground about it 35,000l.; they design a new town, as it were, and a most magnificent piazza." The chief mover in this building speculation was Sir Thomas Bond, who had lent money to Charles II during his exile and been Controller to Queen Henrietta Maria. Bond gave his name to the principal street that was planned on the site of Clarendon House; but when he died in 1685 the work had made little progress. There were in that year but seven inhabited houses on the west side of the street, which was then called Albemarle Buildings. The east side was finished a little later, and the completed street took the name of Bond Street. This was the part now known as Old Bond Street. It quickly became a favourite residential quarter, and in 1708 is described as "a fine new street mostly inhabited by the nobility and gentry." The first Duke of St. Albans, son of Nell Gwynne and Charles II, lived there in "a house of four rooms on a floor, with closets, good cellars and all other conveniences." Other fashionable residents were Lady Elizabeth Wentworth (whose house was taken in 1730 by Lavinia Fenton, the actress who became famous as Polly Peachum and as Duchess of Bolton) and the Countess of Macclesfield, the reputed mother of Richard Savage the poet, who died at her house in Old Bond Street in 1753. Bond Street was completed about 1721 by an extension to Oxford Street, which was called New Bond Street, the original and shorter portion being henceforth Old Bond Street. Though the street did not long continue as a place of fashionable residence, its shops soon gave it repute of another kind, and throughout the eighteenth century it was a favourite quarter for high-class lodgings. This brought to Bond Street an early association with Art and Letters, which in another form it still preserves. Swift, during his last visit to London in 1727, stayed at the house of his cousin Lancelot in New Bond Street, over against the Crown and Cushion. Johnson wrote to his friend Benet Langton at his lodgings at "Mr. Bothwell's the perfumer in New Bond Street." Boswell had lodgings in Old Bond Street, where, on October 16th, 1769, Johnson honoured him with his company at dinner with Sir Joshua Reynolds and David Garrick, on which occasion Oliver Goldsmith strutted about bragging of his new bloom-coloured coat. In the previous year Laurence Sterne had died "at the silk-bag shop" in Old Bond Street (now No. 41). Literary associations of another kind appear in Fielding's novels; in "Amelia" the author speaks of Bond Street "where there lived a very eminent surgeon"; Mr. Allworthy, when in town, used to lodge with a gentlewoman in Bond Street; and there Tom Jones on his arrival in London took a room for himself in the second floor, with one for Partridge in the fourth, the first floor being inhabited by a young gentleman of wit and pleasure. Art was represented in Old Bond Street at the end of the eighteenth century by James Northcote, who dwelt at No. 2; by Sir Thomas Lawrence, who resided successively at Nos. 24 and 29; and by Ozias Humphrey, a painter long nearly forgotten, who has now again come into note. New Bond Street supplies a miscellaneous list of a different character, among them Mrs. Gunning the novelist at No. 147 in 1792, and Lady Hamilton at No. 150 in 1813. In 1797 Nelson was lying wounded at his lodgings at No. 141, when the mob threatened the house because it was not illuminated in honour of the victory at Camperdown, till they learnt who was there. Stevens' (now No. 18) and Long's (now No. 16) Hotels in New Bond Street were in vogue at this time. The former was a haunt of Lord Byron and at the latter Scott entertained Byron at dinner in 1815. Outwardly, Bond Street retains hardly any signs of its eighteenth century origin. But there are few streets that have had a more steadfast reputation. Its jewellers, tailors, perfumers and art dealers can trace a long ancestry. It has always had a certain repute as a fashionable resort and promenade. "Bond Street loungers" are mentioned early in the eighteenth century, and at its close Colman, the dramatist, in "The Heir-at-Law," wrote: "A young fellow is nothing now, without the Bond Street roll, a toothpick between his teeth, and his knuckles crammed into his coat pocket." To Lytton ninety years ago Bond Street was of London's charms the centre:

"Dear Street! where at a certain hour
Man's follies bud forth into flower!
Where the gay minor sighs for fashion,
Where majors live that minors cash on,
Where each who wills may suit his wish,
Here choose a Guido, there a fish."

—ED.]

FOLK-NAMES OF ENGLISH WEEDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The delightful article printed in your last issue under this heading must have given pleasure to many readers, mere lovers of country words and country ways, like myself, as well as to the folklorist and botanist. It has a most pleasant smack of the land and many an echo of those age long associations which go down into the twilight of history and which the language of the country preserves more truly than all the museums of the towns. Dr. Brenchley gives many wild names which are new to me, and will, I suspect, be new to most people, and I would fain adopt some of them; though to refer to my stoncrop as "Welcome-home-husband-though-never-so-drunk," tolerant as it sounds, might savour of affectation. We shall lose a great deal when these folk-names die out—used less and less by each passing generation of country people until at last they are forgotten. The reference to "Bath asparagus," "a kind of wild Star of Bethlehem," was particularly interesting to me. To see these dainty, small green shoots coming to table and know they were "wild asparagus" used, when I was younger, to add one more delight to a visit to Bath, and perhaps it is a shameful confession, but no "tame" asparagus, as the children phrase it, ever tasted so nice. I cannot help a certain regret that articles such as this, in which so much information one would wish to keep ready at hand is given, are presented so often in the pages of periodicals, and reference to them thus becomes difficult. But "Folk-Names of English Weeds" is already cut out and pasted up!—B. S.

BILLIE POLECAT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Billie Polecat has had a by no means uneventful life, which is undoubtedly owing to the fact that his father was a wild polecat from Wales. When I saw Billie for the first time he was a tiny, milk-white baby, blindly trying to scramble from the nest, only to be tugged back by his devoted mother. Later on I used to take all five out on to the lawn, where they would dance, jump, and roll together, more like five animated balls than anything else. There was one which always bounced higher and played longer than the rest, and that was Billie. He was brimming over with vitality, for he was no stupid, sleepy ferret descended from generations of dull, captive-bred ancestors, but a polecat with free, wild blood coursing in his veins. Even now that he is growing old Billie is energy personified, yet he is of such a friendly, good-natured disposition that he is an entirely lovable personality. Once only have Billie's good manners failed him. I was trying to convince an unbelieving audience that the name "polecat" did not, necessarily, mean that Billie was a ferocious creature, but nothing would induce any one of the labourers to touch him. I told them that he would not bite even if they put their fingers in his mouth. "I'll put mine in!" I said, and, suiting action to words, I did so! Billie coughed and choked and, I am sorry to say, did bite! It was but the slightest scratch, by way of protest, but how the lookers-on enjoyed the joke. As long as there is work to be done Billie is all right, for he can then vent his superfluous energy on rabbits, but when the ferreting season is over time begins to hang heavily and so he gets out. He will in a short time tear a hole in the best and strongest of wire-netting. Double and treble thicknesses only take him a little longer, he rips and bites until at last he is free. The first two or three times he escaped he made straight for the house, once appearing in the drawing-room as we were having tea, another time invading the kitchen and nearly reducing the cook and two scandalised cats to hysterics before being recaptured and carried back to durance vile. Then he came into the back-yard at night and was mistaken in the dark for a gigantic rat, being made the target of sundry shots from an air-gun. Fortunately his identity was realised before he was hit! After this, the carpenter made a cage which he declared with profound conviction would hold "the D——I himself!" The rampagious Billie was put in it, but alas for human convictions, that cage would not even keep a mere ferret in, let alone the Father of Evil! This time Billie vanished, but at last I found his tracks on a muddy footpath in a wood. For a fortnight he enjoyed the real wild life, until he blundered into a trap set for a stoat. The man who discovered him came running as hard as his legs would carry him to get me to come and take poor Billie out. "He be that savage he'll bite me all to pieces!" he declared.

I found old Billie caught by a forepaw, and struggling to get free, but when I spoke to him he stopped, and did not move again until I had released him. I carried him home under my coat, where he licked the bruised foot on the way. Luckily it was only pinched, and so little was he the worse for his adventure that when taken out ferreting a few days later he scratched at the lid of his travelling box until the catch came undone and I looked round in time to see Billie departing at full gallop into the thick undergrowth of the wood. The hue and cry was raised, but the elusive Billie had vanished.

However, the terrier marked a hole a little further on, where rumblings could be heard. He was soon recovered, plus two rabbits. As a rule Billie does not run away from me, but to me; for he knows my voice, will come when called, and even haul himself up my skirt hand over hand to see if food is to be had. Yet the old demon will sometimes take to his heels and make off



IN THE DAYS OF HIS YOUTH.

Billie Polecat has turned to scrutinise the camera.

as fast as he can go. This is evidently when he wants a little excitement, such as he had the night he scaled the four foot wall of a pig-sty, got into the fowls' house, and there slew four beautiful Wyandotte pullets and a cockerel.—FRANCES PITT.

A FONT FROM JERUSALEM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reference to the point raised in the letter under this title I do not think the shield in question is that of the Irish family of Nugent, whose shield is ermine two bars gules. It is, I think, the original shield of the family of Waterton of Waterton, one of whom was killed at the siege of Acre in 1191. The Cross of Jerusalem in the dexter point is probably a personal augmentation.—M. S.

FEEDING RABBITS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In your issue of May 25th I read with interest Mr. Davis' reply to a correspondent as to the feeding of rabbits. I give mine no bran, no water, but all kinds of field and vegetable garden produce (waste); hay made of lawn mowings, grasses, cabbage leaves and half to three quarters of an ounce of poultry oats per day. My Belgian hares, crossed with Flemish Giant, turn the scale at 4lb. in four months. I also give potato peelings dried in the oven; of these they are very fond, and with them less oats.—M. C.

THE PEELING OF PLANE TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—My letter upon the subject of the extraordinary completeness with which last autumn plane trees in both France and England shed their bark may, perhaps, find a corroborative illustration in this photograph taken "on the outskirts of a small town in Northern France."—A. H.

SONG BIRDS IN CAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Freedom is being fought for on the battle-fields, and, in a tiny cage on a high window-sill overlooking the sea at Brighton a skylark is singing for freedom, but, unfortunately, this singing for liberty is asking for a long term of imprisonment. A caged bird may live for over twenty years and sing for a greater part of that time, according to those persons who have had experience; but this does not alter the fact that the owner is showing more than twenty years of selfish and unnatural feeling towards a helpless creature. The Germans are pioneers in the practice. Cannot it be made illegal to keep birds in captivity?—A. CAMERON SHORE.

ELECAMPANE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Pliny relates (*lib.* 14, c. 6) that Liria, the mother of Tiberius, attributed her excellent health at an advanced age in part to a preserve made from a root, *Enula Campana* or *Elicampane*, of which she partook every day.—FRASER BADDELEY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—"Druid" in "Silk and Scarlet" mentions *elecampane*. Dick Christian said he used it with oil of rhodium, and it cost then two guineas an ounce.—G. C. A.



PLANES IN FRANCE WITH THEIR STRANGELY CLEAN YELLOW TRUNKS.